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SIPDIS

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SUBJ: GUINEA - U.S./French Meeting with President Compaore

Classified by Charge d'Affaires Dennis Hankins for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) Summary: AF DAS Fitzgerald and French MFA Africa Advisor Montel urged President Compaore to take advantage of the window of opportunity provided by the assassination attempt against CNDD leader Moussa Dadis Camara. The U.S. and France emphasized that acting CNDD leader General Sekouba Konate offered the only real hope for a political transition that could meet all parties' concerns and allow for a real democratic transition. Compaore agreed that the assassination attempt had dramatically changed the situation but said he would have to meet Konate personally this week to determine if he was willing and able to accept the leadership role. If so, Compaore is prepared to ask Morocco to have Dadis stay and to tell Dadis there was no point in going back to Guinea. End Summary

12. (C) AF DAS William Fitzgerald and Foreign Minister Kouchner's Africa Advisor Charlotte Montel met with Burkinabe President Blaise Compaore on December 14 -- the day following the Ouagadougou meeting of the International Contact Group for Guinea (reported SEPTEL). Charge and French DCM attended as note takers. Compaore was joined by Foreign Minister Bedouma Alain Yoda. Compaore said he had wanted to meet with the two delegations given the important role the U.S. and France are playing in the Guinea crisis.

13. (C) DAS Fitzgerald assured President Compaore that the U.S. and France support his mediation efforts but voiced a shared concern that there was a window of opportunity available now because of Dadis' absence from Conakry that will be lost if something is not done before Dadis tries to return from Morocco. Fitzgerald noted the risk of reprisals should Dadis be allowed to return. Montel, noting the frequent discussions about Guinea between Foreign Minister Kouchner and Secretary Clinton and the unity of vision between the two capitals, emphasized the deterioration of the situation and our belief that Konate could be a viable and acceptable alternative to Dadis through a democratic transition period. Recognizing that Konate suggests he is "tired" and not interested in the leadership, Montel called for a "dynamic" to get him to accept and to keep Dadis out. Fitzgerald noted that the Forces Vives had clearly stated their willingness the day earlier to work with Konate but, given the last minute change in the CNDD delegation that put pro-Dadis hardliners in charge, were unsure whether Konate had authority. Montel emphasized that Konate would be hampered by a lack of control posed by pro-Dadis troops "as long as the fiction of his return" remains. If Dadis could be kept out, she felt Konate would be able to maintain order through the transition.

14. (C) Compaore shared his view of the current situation and of his strategy. His approach has been admittedly "prudent" given the risk of escalated violence inherent in Guinea's fractured and undisciplined military. "This is not a normal army where one general is replaced by another. Each has his own troops loyal to him and now we see the creation of militia as well." His original negotiating paper did not specifically call for Dadis to step down since that was likely only to provoke violence. He assesses Konate as someone who would be the "ideal" solution for the crisis saying that, in his

previous encounters, he had seen someone who did not seek power. That said, he is not sure Konate is politically willing or physically able to displace Dadis through the transition. He will try to meet with Konate in Conakry within the next few days to see if Konate is up for the job. If not, pursuing this "ideal" solution is fruitless and likely to provoke violence. If so, he is prepared to urge Morocco to keep Dadis in Morocco and tell Dadis there is no hope for him to gain any legitimacy. Compaore saw Dadis as a clearly unstable element but, if Konate will not take the leadership, he sees the continued need for a "Plan B" that accepts Dadis in some minimized role but does not exclude him. In that vein, he continues to work on a second draft of his mediation paper that establishes the artifice of the "Council of the Republic" -- a collective body performing the role of head of state but not head of government. Dadis could be subsumed in this body while Konate might serve as the executive agent.

15. (C) Compaore directed the Foreign Minister to share the current draft with the U.S. and France. That document (e-mailed to Department, Embassies Conakry, London and Paris, and USAU) does not make reference to a "Council of the Republic." Instead, it presents an amalgam of entities that apparently aim to diffuse power. It includes: a "National Transition Council" -- a 150 person body representing "the components of Guinean society" headed by a president coming from the religious community who is selected by consensus by the members of the National Transition Council; the "Head of State of the Transition" coming from the security and defense forces who names the Prime Minister; The "Government of National Unity" directed by the Prime Minister (who shall come from the Forces Vives). The document stipulates that legislative elections should be held in May 2010 and presidential elections in

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October 2010. The document makes no specific exclusions of individuals wishing to run for president but stipulates "The members of the National Transition Council, the members of the Government of Transition, and the members of the defense and security forces must resign at least four months prior to the election.

16. (C) Comment: Compaore remains cautious to a fault in his willingness to exploit Dadis' absence. He does, however, recognize the opportunity and is certainly now engaged in sounding out Konate as an alternative transition figure to Dadis who could be acceptable to the Forces Vives and the international community. Compaore says he already started talking with members of the CNDD to prepare them for a transition without Dadis. Compaore is clearly aware of U.S. and French interest and, according to the other delegations at the ICG-G meeting, is hearing from ECOWAS, the AU and the UN that Konate offers to one viable hope for a peaceful and consensual transition. He still comes across as timid and reticent to push things too far, too fast.

17. (U) DAS Fitzgerald cleared this cable.

18. (U) Conakry Minimize Considered.

HANKINS